

A
R E P L Y
TO A
P A M P H L E T,
ENTITLED,
“ CONSIDERATIONS
ON A
SEPARATION OF THE METHODISTS
(FROM THE
Established-Church.”

BY HENRY MOORE.

A Church of Christ I take to be, a voluntary Society of Men,
joining themselves together of their own Accord, in order to
the publicly worshipping God, in such a manner as they judge
acceptable to him, and effectual to the Salvation of their Souls:

LOCKE on Toleration.

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A R E P L Y, &c.

THE writer of the "Considerations," tells you in his Title Page, that *Socrates is a Friend, Plato is a Friend, but that Truth is more a Friend.* It is so. Truth is a friend in small things as well as great. It will befriend me in the present instance, by enabling me to give this writer a very short reply. This is no small advantage to me, who have less leisure-time in a month, than he has in a day. If common report be true, he is one of

"The Herd of Gentlemen, who write at ease."

Being placed thus "on the rack of a too easy chair," it may be some relief to employ himself in calling his neighbours to account for their Religion, not only to the risk of that scriptural censure pronounced against those who are *busy bodies in other men's matters*, (for he tells you he is no Methodist) but even to that of being found in a breach of the ninth commandment. My Reply will amount to a charge of this kind, for it will be chiefly a denial of all he has advanced.

The position, upon which his whole book is founded, is, *That the Methodists have separated from the Established Church, and have formed themselves into an Independent Church.* This position, with an ideal picture of its lamentable consequences, and expostulations with those who have done this great evil,

shines, by the assistance of Rhetoric, through *thirty-six pages*. Now what if this position have no foundation in Truth? What in that case becomes of all he has advanced? That it has no such foundation is well known to all unprejudiced persons who are in our Societies, or who will enquire into the fact. We are still what this Writer says we *were*, "the Friends of all—the Antagonists of none." This Gentleman by his Pamphlet, and his friends the Trustees by their Newspapers, may be the antagonists of the Dissenters, and pour their obloquy upon *all* who differ from them, or who dare to worship God according to their own conscience. We leave this *good* work to *them*, and go on our way, as we did from the beginning, (according to this Writer's account of us) "renouncing every thought of making *Proselytes*" to any human system, "and seeking only to make Christians."

A lively imagination helps this Gentleman to make the most of the mistake with which he sets out. Hence you have lamentable consequences pictured, of the evil which this *separation* (the lye of the day) will cause, especially to the rising generation. "Will not, says he, the children of the Methodists then grow up Methodists, as the children of Presbyterians now grow up Presbyterians? And will not the unavoidable consequence be, that only a little decency of behaviour, and perhaps somewhat of the form of religion, will remain among them?"

I do not love to speculate, when I can recur to fact. It is generally allowed, that the Members of the Methodist Society in London, are in general the most deeply experienced Christians, and have been for many years the most distant from those consequences which this Writer apprehends, of any Society in the Kingdom. Now it is certain, that the Society in London, over whom Mr. Wesley immediately presided, and with whom he spent five months every year, have had, *as a body*, no more connection with the Church of England for forty years past, in the sense for which this Writer contends, than with any other body of people. Yet there

there is properly no *Separation from the Church in London*—no independent Church formed. Every one that pleases may, as in Bristol, attend his Parish-Church. Meantime the Church-Service is read every Lord's day in six Chapels in the City, without any regard to any other worshipping body of people. The Lord's supper is also administered in them all, and in the Chapels in the suburbs and Circuit. In the two principal Chapels Clergymen generally officiate, and in the others the Preachers, both Itinerant and Local. Now do the children of the Members of the London Society grow up Methodists? Just as much as those in Londonderry. When they "desire to flee from the wrath to come," and evidence this desire by a real change of life, they are received, and not before. Christian discipline, while properly executed, (which it cannot be, if the late act of the Trustees in Bristol be allowed) will always keep the Methodists pure as a body, however they may become *all things* to their Congregations that they may gain the more to God.

Thus easily are the first six pages of this compound of *mistake and flourish* answered. But there is a paragraph in the seventh page, which is really shocking, as it must have been inserted *wilfully* to deceive. The following words, with the usual marks of a Quotation, are given to the public, as if they were ours. You "are convinced that, a few Ministers and Members "excepted, the Church of England to which you have "been united, has lost the life and power of Religion," and therefore you, "have thought it your duty to "form yourselves into an independent Church." I do not wonder at the cry that follows against the *charity, candour, &c.* of this "sweeping censure." Having ventured this breach of the ninth commandment, the Fabricator certainly is *wise* to make all the use he can of it. The impartial reader will not, I believe, think my words too strong, when I inform him, that those words are taken from the minutes of an *American Conference*, held at Baltimore in the year 1784, soon after the conclusion of the War : that they concern America

only, and that they never have been adopted, nor were ever proposed to be adopted in these Kingdoms. On the contrary, the following declaration was made in the minutes of our Conference two years after, "What they do in America, or what their Minutes say on this subject, is nothing to us. We will continue in the good old way." Now, what can I say to this compound of *art and slander*? I can say nothing but, *God be merciful to the Fabricator!*

From the tenth to the fifteenth Pages we have abundance of that *wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God*. This writer descants largely on the wisdom of suffering *good and bad*, professor and profane, to continue in the visible Church. To give some countenance to this, he comments on the parables of the *tares and the wheat*, the *net cast into the sea*, &c. But can this Gentleman really think, that Christ designed there should be no discipline in his Church? Can he, or his friends, imagine that the want of it in the present day in what is called Christendom, is owing to the wisdom of God, and not to the ignorance, corruption, and sloth of man? If we are to understand those parables as this writer does, what can we make of our Lord's seven epistles to the Churches of Asia, Revelations ii. and iii. Is it not evident, that the evils which existed in those Churches, were chiefly owing to the want of Discipline? Was it not owing to this, that the corruption gained such strength, that the Lord at length permitted their overthrow by the Imposter Mahomet? An awful fact this, which sweeps away the fine speculations of this writer, as so many cobwebs.

To the forced, unscriptural comment, which this Gentleman gives us upon the parable of the *tares and the wheat*, I shall oppose that of Mr. Wesley, Matt. xiii. 24. After informing us that the "original expression, (*ζιζανια*) properly means *darnel*, "which is very like wheat, whereas *tares* bear no resemblance thereto," (and with this certainly the whole passage agrees, for our Lord supposes that even his enlightened servants might *mistake the one for the other*, ver. 29,) he says,

says, "*Darnel*, in the Church, is properly *outside Christians*, such as have the *form* of godliness without the *power*. Open sinners, such as have neither the form nor the power, are not so properly *darnel*, as thistles and brambles. These ought to be *rooted up* without delay, and not suffered to remain in the Christian Community.--- Whereas, should fallible men attempt to *gather up the darnel*, they would often *root up the wheat with them*." The other passages quoted by this ingenious advocate for worldly religion, will bear the same solution. Men may be *dead* in the sight of God, that is, have neither *faith* nor *love*, and yet have a *name* to live among the children of God, which was evidently the case with some in the Church of Sardis, Rev. iii. 1—3. To understand our Lord in any other way, tends to set one half of the Bible against the other. Indeed, even this writer is driven by the force of several scriptures to undo all he has said on this subject, in his note, No. 2, and to own that "a *kind* of separation may be an indispensable duty." This is all that we ever contended for; and for no other separation do we now contend.

To what is said from the 15th to the 17th pages inclusive, concerning the unwillingness of the German Reformers to separate from the Church of Rome; and the Puritans, Mr. Baxter, and Dr. Doddridge, to separate from the Church of England, the same reply only is necessary. We commend the Catholicism of these good men. We will follow them, as they followed Christ. We will not form an Independent Church. We will be "Friends of all; antagonists of none."--- We leave this latter character to the writer of the "Considerations," and to his new friends, whose assertions he has received without examination.

After thus preparing the mind of his reader, this Gentleman comes at length (page 18) to the point in dispute, viz. the late violent and arbitrary conduct of the Trustees of Broad-mead and Guinea-street Chapels. — This really needed some preparation. — That men professing to be Methodists, should expel a preacher, appointed by the Conference from those Chapels, against the mind of the Leaders, Stewards,

Stewards, and People, without any charge preferred, or trial of any kind, taking counsel only with their attorney, is rather new in the religious world: And every one that knows what Methodism is, must know that such conduct tends to its dissolution.

All this the writer of the "Considerations" is obliged to acknowledge. But he attempts to recriminate upon those who have resisted this arbitrary conduct, by asserting that we have also on our part violated all the rules of Methodism. To prove this he states, that the Methodist Preachers are not clergymen, but laymen: That they are not to administer the sacraments, but only to preach: That they are themselves to attend the Church of England, and to receive the sacrament there.

In reply to this, I would ask, does this writer found these distinctions upon the rules or laws of the established Church? By no means. He must know, that to preach, or even be a Member of a religious Society, not only constitutes a man a Dissenter from the Church of England, according to the *Canons* of that Church, but that such are declared excommunicated *ipso facto*. The Church of England knows nothing of the distinction between its Members' preaching, exhorting, &c. and administering the sacrament; nor does she make any allowance for either. This Gentleman must therefore allude entirely to those excellent *prudential* rules laid down in the minutes of the various conferences. These rules, by the help of God, we will abide by, as we are determined to be "Friends of all; antagonists of none;" nor will we ever deviate from them, but by a clear call of Providence. That such a call has, for these forty years past, occasioned deviations from those rules, is well known to all who know Methodism. That Mr. Wesley never did abide by those rules, when the real work of God required a deviation from them, is as well known in our connection, as that these rules have been *generally* observed. That Mr. Wesley knew that such deviations would be necessary in future also, among such a body of people as

ours,

ours, formed out of all other religious connections, and in which are many who *scruple* or *dislike* going to Church, is also well known; as likewise that he made provision for it, so as to violate necessary order as little as possible. To give an indubitable proof of this; I will here insert the certificate which he gave to those preachers whom he ordained: I copy from that which he gave to me.

Know all men by these presents, that I John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, did, on the day of the date hereof, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained Ministers,) set apart Henry Moore, for the office of a Presbyter in the Church of God: a man whom I judge qualified to feed the flock of Christ, and to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the Church of England; and as such I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord 1789.

JOHN WESLEY. - (Seal.)

Present and assisting,	} Presbyters of the Church of England.
James Creighton,	
Peard Dickenson,	

Will the Writer of the "Considerations," or his new Friends, reply to this, that such Ordination is nothing? Will they dishonour Mr. Wesley, in order to condemn his Sons in the Gospel? Will they deny the strong facts produced by Lord King, to prove that Presbyters and Bishops are of the same order? And are they prepared to maintain the consequence, that almost all the Churches of Europe are no Churches of Christ? and that those only are such, who derive their authority from the Church of Rome? Is this Gentleman quite sure that the Church of England has in reality any other Ordination except that of Presbyters? If it be granted that she has, I would ask, Where

is the *law* that restrains Ordination to the Bishops, and denies that power to the Presbyters? If it be replied, the *Canons* restrain it, I ask, were the *Canons* ever confirmed by Act of Parliament, as the *Liturgy*, *Articles* and *Homilies* were? If not, are they any part of the Church of England, as by *law* established? I would also enquire, who of the Clergy observe those *Canons*, or think they are bound in duty so to do? If this Gentleman cannot give a satisfactory answer to these Questions, and if it appear that the Methodist Preachers act in these things by Mr. Wesley's authority, and in so doing conform to the Church of England, as much as the nature of the blessed work in which they are engaged will permit, then what becomes of all that is said, and upon which such stress is laid in the pages that follow:—"of the Methodist Preachers, being Laymen, &c. and of their trampling Mr. Wesley's most solemn injunctions under their feet?" If by these injunctions be meant *forms, times and places* of worship, &c. he trampled them under his feet himself, whenever the conversion or edification of souls required it. We will follow his steps. In all these things we will wait the call of Providence, and act accordingly. And we shall see which will prove the "dull, dry, separate party," those who would dragoon their Brethren to Church, or those who allowing liberty to all, in those things in which GOD allows it, still proceed in the good old way, "Friends to all; Antagonists to none."

The Remarks contained in pages 20, 21, 22, and 23, scarcely deserve a reply. They are, in substance, a breach of our Lord's command, *Judge not, that ye be not judged*. In all that string of quibbles, in those pages, whereby my sincerity is supposed to be sapped, there is but one supposition which will bear the scrutiny of an impartial and intelligent Reader. This Writer supposes, that my proposal to the Trustees of Broadmead and Guinea-street Chapels, to become Trustees of Portland Chapel also; and my consenting that a clause should be inserted in the deed, to prevent the
service

service in Church hours, or the Sacrament, without the consent of the Trustees, could not be *sincere*, because, says he, "the old Trustees were but a third of the whole number, and the rest were men of your own choosing." What a pity it is that this Gentleman will implicitly receive all that is said on the one side, without making any enquiry, on the other; and that he should from that *partial* information, make a *public* attack not only on my *errors* (that were a little thing) but on my moral character also! I, whom he called within these three months his *Dear Friend*, and reposed in my breast the secrets of his soul! And am I really such an artful man? Did I so contrive matters, that the old Trustees should thus be left in a minority whenever I pleased? So far from it, that my proposal, if accepted (it was a sacrifice to Peace, which I now believe I ought not to have made, as it concerned all the people) would not only have put it out of my power to introduce any thing of the kind, but also those who should come after me; for the Trustees of Portland Chapel consisted at that time of but NINE persons, and some of them were the *intimate friends* of the TWELVE Trustees of Broadmead and Guinea-street Chapels! It was more than a year after this, when I had left the Circuit, that the number of the Trustees of Portland Chapel was increased. What is the inference from the whole? Why, that *jealousy is cruel as the grave*, and that a *Bigot* cannot be a *Friend*.

What this Writer is pleased to say, Page 23 and 24, concerning those Preachers who have joined the Trustees, and support them (I would hope mistakingly) in their persecuting measures, I am not called to answer. They have been tried by their Brethren, who best understood the Question in which they are implicated. This Gentleman, who tells you he is no Methodist, and who cannot be a competent judge of those things which concern either the Preachers or the People, must excuse us if we refuse to acknowledge either the *Wisdom* or the *Authority* of his decision.

What

What follows to the end of this production, is chiefly Rhetorical Declamation, founded on the same mistake (if not wilful falsehood), viz: That the Methodists have formed themselves into an Independent Church, or are striving so to do. This zealous Non-Methodist, and who, to use his own words, "differs from us in a variety of instances," seems determined, however, that we shall not differ from him, even in non-essential matters, with impunity. He exhorts all those who are of his enlarged mind, not to regard Conference, Preachers, &c. &c. but to fight for the Church!! Alas! my Friend, do you know what spirit you are of? Supposing that you could persuade all who are of your mind, and who have as fiery a zeal, with as little information as yourself, to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death, among their quiet Brethren; who only desire the liberty of worshipping God according to their own conscience, which they are joyfully willing to allow to all who differ from them in judgment:—Supposing, I say, that you could succeed like your Friends the Trustees, in tearing those asunder whom God has joined together on the most liberal, the most catholic principles:—Supposing that this could be done throughout the Nation, and that ten or twelve Trustees should in every place, as in Bristol, be able to drive away upwards of eight hundred out of a thousand people, with their Leaders and Stewards, unless they would submit to receive the law, even respecting GOD, at their mouth—What would this profit you? Do you think the Head of the Church will thank you, or them, for this work? Remember the adage, "He who cannot build a Cottage, may nevertheless pull down a Castle." I fear you have done but little in your life towards the conversion of souls; but you may do much to scatter, tear, and slay.—GOD grant that it may not be said in that day, both to you and your Friends, concerning those who may be hurt by your illiberal declamation, or oppressive conduct, *these souls have perished in their iniquity, but their blood doth require at your hands*.

F I N I S

